



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6502**

July 7, 2020

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

Facebook has become the most-widely used platform for Americans to receive and share information with one another and to participate in political dialogue. Given the important role your platform plays in our nation's democratic debate, the challenge to assure that it does not become a vehicle to accelerate the spread of disinformation, racist, and incendiary content is an immediate one.

In the 2016 election, Facebook was used to reach millions of Americans with racist, divisive, and false content, including by foreign actors to deceive voters and influence our exercise of democratic elections. This year, the policy you have set that allows even demonstrably false, misleading, and racist content to appear in posts and in sponsored advertisements is already threatening to damage our democracy and erode peace in our society. That's why I'm writing to urge you to take effective action to protect our elections and democratic discourse, as well as to weed out disinformation and the dark strain of racism and hate that has festered across Facebook's platform.

We approach a 2020 election that will take place in the midst of a global pandemic and a broad and serious national conversation about how to confront the legacy of slavery and segregation and their impact on our justice system. That election will not only choose our next president and Congress but also shape the redistricting map for the next decade. In addition, Americans will cast their ballots with a myriad of important issues in the forefront of their minds: how to expand economic opportunity, combat poverty, make our communities safer, and safeguard our nation's security and interests around the world. So much is at stake for our country and our democracy in 2020, and a platform with the reach of Facebook's has an obligation not to allow itself to be used to undermine the integrity of our election and hinder citizens' access to factual information.

To that end, I am asking that you and your team take concrete action to ensure that Facebook does not facilitate the spread of hate or deliberate misinformation intended to mislead voters in our democracy.

While I recognize the recent change that Facebook announced regarding the labeling of misinformation in certain cases, that ought to be extended to all political ads. It is unacceptable to permit candidates for elected office to advertise or post deliberately misleading or racist content on your platform. Facebook should hire more content screeners and data scientists located in the United States to review all political ads and viral content and to block or label content that is clearly over the line. Facebook should also redraw that line by updating the definitions for what constitutes policy violations and ensure that the current policies are not too permissive. Simply allowing users to 'opt-out' of political ads is not an acceptable solution; citizens cannot simply opt-out of our democracy, or else it will not function.

I also encourage you to institute and enforce a heightened review period for thirty days before the November election. With so much on the line, Facebook should redouble all efforts to ensure that it is not again used to undermine an election with lies and hatred. With less than 150 days until the election, I hope you will take steps now to put such a review period in place. Additionally, Facebook ought to take more decisive action to combat hatred, racism, and misinformation shared on and promoted by private Facebook groups.

Furthermore, I strongly recommend that Facebook heed the request of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights by creating an office of civil rights at the company led by an executive-level officer and establishing an independent and permanent civil-rights ombudsman office that reports to the Board of Directors. Facebook should have a dedicated team with influence over Facebook products and access to its data and algorithms. Having such a team would make it easier for the company to combat racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of hatred across the Facebook platform. I also endorse the Leadership Conference's recommendation that Facebook increase the amount of data it releases regularly as part of the company's transparency report, which would make it easier for researchers to study the impact of your policies and products on our society and our democracy.

I strongly urge you to take bold action and adopt these recommendations, which I believe will strengthen Facebook's platform as a place of engagement by citizens in our democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steny Hoyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

STENY H. HOYER  
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER